Healing
and the Prayer of Faith

Lionel Hartley

This page intentionally blank

This page intentionally blank

Healing

and the Prayer of Faith

— o0o —

Lionel Hartley

Healing and the Prayer of Faith
Lionel Hartley
First published in New Zealand by Stereo Publications, Christchurch.
Updated, revised and re-published by L&R Hartley, Murwillumbah, NSW, Australia. 1997
This book is copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study, research, criticism or review as permitted under the Copyright Act, no part of this book may be reproduced by any process without the written permission of the publisher or author.
Copyright Lionel Hartley, ©1970, ©1997
Bible references from the Authorised King James Version of the Holy Bible.
This book is an expansion and revision of the 1970 Edition
Cutter Numbers: Dewey H2551;
Sanborn H3321
Font: Times
Catalogue reference HPF-E01
Available from www.lrhartley.com

Contents

Introduction **4**

Healing Prayer **5**

True Stories and a Parable **11**

The Mechanism of Healing **13**

Is Faith Healing Possible Today? **21**

Appendix 1* **22**
Seven critiques for modern so-called “faith healing”

Appendix 2** **23**
A prayer

This page intentionally blank

Introduction

The author Fred Craddock tells a story about a young pastor who goes to pray with an older woman. She's near death; she's in the hospital lying on the pillow, gasping for breath. He visits with her for a while, and then he says, "I need to go, but would you like to have prayer before I go?"

The old woman says, "Yes", so he asks, "What would you like us to pray for today?" And she says, "I'd like you to pray that I'll be healed, of course."

The young pastor gasps but goes on, "Lord, we pray for your sustaining presence with this sick sister. And if it be thy will, we pray that she will be restored to health and to service. But if it's not thy will, we certainly hope that [You will help her to]

adjust to her circumstances. Amen."

Suddenly the old woman opens her eyes and sits up in bed. She throws her feet over the side of the bed. She stands up. She says, "I think I'm healed!" And she strides out the door. The last the pastor sees, she's striding down the hall toward the nurses' station, saying "Look! Look at me!"

The pastor goes down the steps, goes out to the parking lot. Before he opens the door of his car, he looks up and says, "Don't You ever do that to me again!"

Healing Prayer

Seven Aspects to Healing Prayer in the General Epistle of James

Reading from, Chapter 5: "Is any among you afflicted? let him pray. Is any merry? let him sing psalms. 14) Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord: 15) And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him. 16) Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much. 17) Elias was a man subject to like passions as we are, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain: and it rained not on the earth by

the space of three years and six months. 18) And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth brought forth her fruit" (James 5:13-18).

There are seven aspects to prayer in this passage:

1. Individual prayer (Let him pray.) vs 13 - Begin with your own petition

Psalm 30:2 says, "O Lord my God, I cried unto thee, and thou hast healed me."

Psalm 147:3 says, "He healeth the broken in heart, and bindeth up their wounds."

John Wimber wrote, "My responsibility is to pray, God's responsibility is to heal. If he chooses not to do so, then he's responsible for that."

2. United prayer (let them pray) vs 14 - Invite others to pray.

2 Chronicles 7:14-15 says, "If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land. 15) Now mine eyes shall be open, and mine ears attent unto the prayer that is made in this place."

3. Believing prayer (the prayer of faith shall save the sick) vs 16

The disciples were unable to heal a lunatic because of their unbelief according to Jesus: "And when they were come to the multitude, there came to him a certain man, kneeling down to him, and saying, 15) Lord, have mercy on my son: for he is a lunatic, and sore vexed: for ofttimes he falleth into the fire, and oft into the water. 16) And I brought him to thy disciples, and they could not cure him. 17) Then Jesus answered and said, O faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you? how long shall I suffer you? bring him hither to me. 18) And Jesus rebuked the devil; and he departed out of him: and the child was cured from that very hour. 19) Then came the disciples to Jesus apart, and said, Why could not we

cast him out? 20) And Jesus said unto them, Because of your unbelief: for verily I say unto you, If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you. 21) Howbeit this kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting." (Matthew 17:14-21)

4. Intercessory prayer (pray for one another) vs 16

One of the most revealing verses in the Bible tells us what happened to Job when he prayed for his friends. Let us note too, that these 'friends' were less than helpful during his trial - they contributed to his woes by their unhelpful suggestions and accusations. Job 42:10 reads, "And the LORD turned the captivity of Job, when he prayed for his friends: also the LORD gave Job twice as much as he had before."

When George McCluskey married and started a family, he decided to invest one hour a day in prayer, because he wanted his children to follow Christ. After a time, he expanded his prayers to include his grandchildren and great-grandchildren. Every day between 11 a.m. and noon, he prayed for the next three generations.

As the years went by, his two daughters committed their lives to Christ and married men who both went into full-time ministry. The two couples produced four girls and one boy. Each of the girls married a minister, and the boy became a pastor.

The first two children born to this generation were both boys. Upon graduation from high school, the two cousins chose the same college and became roommates. During their sophomore year, one boy decided to go into the ministry. The other didn't. He undoubtedly felt some pressure to continue the family legacy, but he chose instead to pursue his interest in psychology.

He earned his doctorate and eventually wrote books for parents that became bestsellers. He started a radio program heard on more than a thousand stations each day. The man's name was James Dobson. Through his intercessory prayers,

George McCluskey affected far more than one family.

5. Effectual prayer (effectual fervent prayer) vs 16

'Effectual' is a legal term meaning "...with power" from the Greek 'energeo' (With energy).

Prayer pulls the rope below and the great bell rings above in the ears of God. Some scarcely stir the bell, for they pray so languidly; others give but an occasional pluck at the rope; but he who wins with heaven is the man who grasps the rope boldly and pulls continuously, with all his might.

6. Definite, specific prayer (Elias... prayed earnestly that it might not rain) vs 17

A lady lay in bed suffering violent head pains. While thus suffering she said to a friend who was watching by her side, "If only I could get ten minutes' sleep, I should feel better." The friend said nothing but offered up a silent prayer to God to grant the ten minutes' sleep. True, the petition was feeble, and the faith feeble, but the Lord, who is very tender, did not despise either the feebleness of the faith or the smallness of the subject of the request. The patient presently slept and described her sleep as most delicious.

Specific prayer availeth much. We must narrow down our prayers if we want God to give us that which we need. Our children feel free to come to us and ask us for even the most insignificant things. The only hope of their getting that which they want is by asking, and asking specifically.

However, we mustn't be presumptive. If the President of the United States invited us to visit him, and we tried to assume the prerogatives of the Presidency ourselves, he'd soon put us out. Yet, this is how some of us act toward God.

He has told us to ask, but our asking often demonstrates an attitude of irresponsibility on our part. We ask Him to overrule His natural laws, to act as our

servant who must accede to our command. We must never play God when we pray.

Translating from Danilo Aquisti's *La Barzelletta anticlericale,* "This is the prayer that a Catholic girl said while kneeling in front of the statue of the Virgin Mary: 'You who conceived without sin, let me sin without conceiving'."

7. Repeated persistent prayer (And he prayed again) vs 18

The verb persevere comes from the Latin root *persevereus* which means "continue steadfastly, persist" and that word comes from two others, *per-* for "very" and *severus* for "strict." So in this context it means to persist in a methodical way despite obstacles or distractions.

Jesus introduced a certain parable with its point stated right at the beginning: "And he spake a parable unto them to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint; 2) Saying, There was in a city a judge, which feared not God, neither regarded man: 3) And there was a widow in that city; and she came unto him, saying, Avenge me of mine adversary. 4) And he would not for a while: but afterward he said within himself, Though I fear not God, nor regard man; 5) Yet because this widow troubleth me, I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me. 6) And the Lord said, Hear what the unjust judge saith. 7) And shall not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him, though he bear long with them? 8) I tell you that he will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?" (Luke 18:1-8)

"… Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning" (Psalm 30:5b).

In a sermon preached on 19 April 1549, Hugh Latimer (1485-1555) said, *"Gutta cavat lapidem, non vi sed saepe cadendo."* Translated: The drop of rain maketh a hole in the stone, not by violence, but by oft falling. (Lionel)

"God does not say, ask once, and you shall receive. He bids us ask, to

unwearyingly persist in prayer. The persistent asking brings the petitioner into a more earnest attitude, and gives him an increased desire to receive the things for which he asks." (EGW, 1900)

Persistence was noted in the story of Noah: "And it came to pass at the end of forty days, that Noah opened the window of the ark which he had made: 7) And he sent forth a raven, which went forth to and fro, until the waters were dried up from off the earth. 8) Also he sent forth a dove from him, to see if the waters were abated from off the face of the ground; 9) But the dove found no rest for the sole of her foot, and she returned unto him into the ark, for the waters were on the face of the whole earth: then he put forth his hand, and took her, and pulled her in unto him into the ark. 10) And he stayed yet other seven days; and again he sent forth the dove out of the ark; 11) And the dove came in to him in the evening; and, lo, in her mouth was an olive leaf plucked off: so Noah knew that the waters were abated from off the earth" (Genesis 8:6-11).

One of the fascinating stories of Bible Archaeology concerns the discovery of ancient Nineveh. For a long time no one was sure where to look for the ruins of Nineveh and possible sites were a matter of considerable debate among scholars. In the early 1840's, an amateur French archaeologist, named Paul Botta, hired a crew of native diggers and began excavating a likely looking mound on the banks of the Tigris River.

After several weeks of fruitless digging, however, Botta concluded he was searching in the wrong place. He moved to another location. Soon afterwards, Henry Layard, an English archaeologist, began digging on the site that Botta had abandoned.

With almost the first shovel of dirt, Layard struck the walls of one of the great palaces of Nineveh! If only Botta had dug a few inches deeper he would have made one of the great archaeological finds of all time and would have been hailed as the "Discoverer of Nineveh" instead of Layard!

Tim Hansel says, "I have prayed hundreds, if not thousands, of times for the

Lord to heal me-and he finally healed me of the need to be healed."

True Stories and a Parable

Here is a true story:

"And they came to Jericho: and as he went out of Jericho with his disciples and a great number of people, blind Bartimaeus, the son of Timaeus, sat by the highway side begging. And when he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to cry out, and say, Jesus, thou son of David, have mercy on me. And many charged him that he should hold his peace: but he cried the more a great deal, Thou son of David, have mercy on me".

"And Jesus stood still, and commanded him to be called. And they call the blind man, saying unto him, Be of good comfort, rise; he calleth thee. And he, casting away his garment, rose, and came to Jesus. And

Jesus answered and said unto him, What wilt thou that I should do unto thee? The blind man said unto him, Lord, that I might receive my sight. And Jesus said unto him, Go thy way; thy faith hath made thee whole. And immediately he received his sight, and followed Jesus in the way" (Mark 10:46-52).

Here is a parable:

It was late in Jesus' ministry and the crowds had gathered once again to listen to Him preach, teach and heal. As he was in the process of healing a man, two gentlemen in the back of the crowd struck up a conversation.

"Hi," says one, "I'm Bartimaeus Ben-Timaeus from Jericho. He healed me of my sight, you know."

'That's wonderful. I'm from Jerusalem and He healed my sight too, even though I was born blind."

"Yes", replied Bartimaeus, " He just said to me, 'What wilt thou that I should do unto thee?' And I said, 'Lord, that I might receive my sight.' Then Jesus said to me, 'Go thy way; thy faith hath made thee whole.' And immediately I received my sight."

"Now hang on a minute," said the other man, "what about the clay?"

"Clay?" said Bartimaeus, "What clay? You don't need clay. All you need is faith!"

Whereupon the other man argued, "This man that is called Jesus spat on the ground, and made clay of the spittle, and anointed my eyes, and said to me, Go to the pool of Siloam, and wash: and I went and washed, and I received my sight."

And the parable concludes with this statement: "So began the first two denominations: the Mudites and the Non-mudites".

Here is another true story:

"And again, departing from the coasts of Tyre and Sidon, he came unto the sea of Galilee, through the midst of the coasts of Decapolis. And they bring unto him one that was deaf, and had an impediment in his speech; and they beseech him to put his hand upon him. And he took him aside from the multitude, and put his fingers into his

ears, and he spit, and touched his tongue; And looking up to heaven, he sighed, and saith unto him, Ephphatha, that is, Be opened. And straightway his ears were opened, and the string of his tongue was loosed, and he spake plain. And he charged them that they should tell no man: but the more he charged them, so much the more a great deal they published it; And were beyond measure astonished, saying, He hath done all things well: he maketh both the deaf to hear, and the dumb to speak" (Mark 7:31-37).

The Mechanism of Healing

In both the Old and New Testaments, the Bible recounts many who were miraculously healed. What the Bible does not explain in any detail is the mechanism by which this happened. Sometimes Jesus used mud & saliva, other times words and sometimes Jesus healed from a distance (one of my sons once suggested that this was by remote control). We must conclude that mud and saliva had nothing to do with it. So why would Jesus use them?

Consider something else. Physicians do not really heal sickness, they merely improve the conditions for the body to heal itself. God created our bodies to heal themselves. They call the treatment that

emergency medics apply 'First Aid', suggesting that the application of treatments is only the first stage in the healing process.

An anonymous rhyme says,

"He who formed our frame
Made man a perfect whole
And made the body's health
Depend upon the soul."

Thus, one question about faith healing is this: 'What part of the healing process is connected with the mind?'

A recent publication on brain plasticity cited several scientific studies that showed that placebos (in this case, sugar pills) were effective in healing because people believed the pills were medicine, and not just sugar. God has hard-wired our brains to boost healing when we believe in healing.

The Holy Bibles concurs: "A merry heart doeth good like a medicine: but a broken spirit drieth the bones" (Proverbs 17:22).

This sure sounds like some counsel about health as it uses terms like 'medicine' and 'dried up bones.' However, when the Bible says "cheerful heart," is it not actually speaking of the physical heart.

The idea is that the heart is the seat of our emotions. We understand emotions to be connected with the mind. When someone says, 'my heart was broken', we understand them to be speaking about an emotion.

Oscar Wilde in his book 'The Ballad of Reading (Redding) Gaol.' wrote, "How else, but through a broken heart, may Lord Christ enter in?"

As we are talking about the mind and health in this context, this teaches us about the relationship between our emotions and health. Our mind has an impact on our health.

This is elaborated in Proverbs 18:14, "The spirit of a man will sustain his infirmity; but a wounded spirit who can bear?"

This suggests, regarding attitude and

sickness, that our mind actually helps us through infirmities.

Hippocrates (often called the father of Medicine) said, "The natural healing force within each one of us is the greatest force in getting well."

The Bible agrees. There is a connection between our thoughts and our health.

When Proverbs 18:14 says, "but a wounded (or crushed) spirit who can bear? It means that if the mind is wounded, the body doesn't have chance.

Proverbs 18:14 asks, but does not answer the question. Presumably the answer is "you cannot bear illness with a crushed spirit." So, what is the solution to a crushed spirit?

I suggest part of the answer may be found in the Apostle Paul's letter to Rome: "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; And patience, experience; and experience, hope: And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us" (Romans 5:1-5).

We see here several 'mind' terms: faith, peace, rejoice and hope. These are the opposite of a crushed spirit.

To obtain rejoicing and hope, we start with faith in Jesus. The way to a positive spirit, which has a decided impact on our health, is faith in Jesus.

Let's check this out biblically…

"And when Jesus departed thence, two blind men followed him, crying, and saying, Thou son of David, have mercy on us. And when he was come into the house, the blind men came to him: and Jesus saith unto them, Believe ye that I am able to do this? They said unto him, Yea, Lord. Then touched he their eyes, saying, According to your faith be it unto you. And their eyes

were opened; and Jesus straitly charged them, saying, See that no man know it")Matthew 9:27-30).

If you were just observing this miracle and knew of none other you would conclude that the elements of the miracle were a mental conviction that Jesus could do cure their blindness, and Jesus actually touching their eyes.

We find a different outcome in Mark 9:17-19, "And one of the multitude answered and said, Master, I have brought unto thee my son, which hath a dumb spirit; And wheresoever he taketh him, he teareth him: and he foameth, and gnasheth with his teeth, and pineth away: and I spake to thy disciples that they should cast him out; and they could not. He answereth him, and saith, O faithless generation, how long shall I be with you? how long shall I suffer you? bring him unto me."

No miracle was performed here. The disciples were not able to heal the man's son. Jesus was speaking to His disciples when He called them a faithless generation. It appears that the disciples did not have sufficient mental conviction in God's power to work through them.

Fortunately the story doesn't end there as we will see if we continue reading with me from verse 20: "And they brought him unto him: and when he saw him, straightway the spirit tare him; and he fell on the ground, and wallowed foaming. And [Jesus] asked his father, How long is it ago since this came unto him? And he said, Of a child. And ofttimes it hath cast him into the fire, and into the waters, to destroy him: but if thou canst do any thing, have compassion on us, and help us. Jesus said unto him, If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth. And straightway the father of the child cried out, and said with tears, Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief" (Mark 9:20-24).

Jesus is saying here that the key to healing is the mental conviction that "all things are possible to him that believeth".

Do you have a good medical doctor who doesn't just treat the symptoms, but treats

both the mind and the body? I don't imagine that my doctor will give me a discount if my mind has already gone.

Interestingly, the father in the story from Mark 9 thought that the solution to being a bit short of the mark in his mental conviction, was that Jesus could help him overcome unbelief.

Was the father right? Let's some more from verse 25.

"When Jesus saw that the people came running together, he rebuked the foul spirit, saying unto him, Thou dumb and deaf spirit, I charge thee, come out of him, and enter no more into him. And the spirit cried, and rent him sore, and came out of him: and he was as one dead; insomuch that many said, He is dead. But Jesus took him by the hand, and lifted him up; and he arose" (Mark 9:25-27).

Jesus healed the son. What better way for Jesus to strengthen the belief of the father.

For a further lesson, we can continue this story, picking it up at verse 28

"And when he was come into the house, his disciples asked him privately, Why could not we cast him out? And he said unto them, This kind can come forth by nothing, but by prayer and fasting" (Mark 9:28-29).

This is a most interesting passage. The disciples want to know more about the mechanism for healing - why they could not heal this boy. Jesus says the mechanism for healing is a sincere heart-connection with the Divine.

So far, we have noted that a mental conviction or belief is the important part. What does prayer have to do with mental conviction? This understanding opens up a new view of mental conviction, and that is that mental conviction comes as a result of spending time with God.

The father was asked to instantly believe, suggesting that a greater degree of faith, understanding or mental conviction is required of those who perform the miracle than for those who request the miracle.

Now an important question: If God

created our minds to help heal our bodies through faith, how does the mental conviction of the healer have anything to do with the healing?

There must be a supernatural element, beyond the logical/scientific connection between mind and body.

It may help if we look at an earlier miracle, this time in Mark 8:22, "And he cometh to Bethsaida; and they bring a blind man unto him, and besought him to touch him".

These people asked Jesus to 'touch' this man. In other words they wanted Jesus to heal him by means of putting His hands on him.

It seems that the minds of the blind man's friends are first involved in this potential healing, because they believed that touching would be needed.

Verses 23-24, "And he took the blind man by the hand, and led him out of the town; and when he had spit on his eyes, and put his hands upon him, he asked him if he saw ought. And he looked up, and said, I see men as trees, walking".

Jesus both touched the blind man and put saliva on his eyes. In the Matthew 9 healing of two blind men, Jesus just touched them. According to the record, no saliva was involved. The friends in the Mark 8 miracle just expected a touch. Why did Jesus add saliva?

Albert Barnes' Commentary on John 9:6 (involving another miracle using saliva and mud) reveal that the Jews "regarded spittle as medicinal to the eyes when diseased." None of the observers believe that spit would immediately heal blind eyes, but it was the logical thing to use in those times.

Scientists nowadays tell us that saliva contains a protein responsible for healing called 'histatin'. To come to this conclusion, the researchers used epithelial cells that line the inner cheek, and cultured them in petri dishes until the surfaces were completely covered with cells.

Then they made an artificial wound in the cell layer in each dish, by scratching a small portion of the cells away. In one dish, cells were bathed in an isotonic fluid without any additions. In the other dish, cells were bathed in human saliva.

After 16 hours the scientists noticed that the saliva-treated wound was almost completely closed. In the dish with the untreated wound, a substantial part of the wound was still open.

This proved that human saliva contains a factor that accelerates wound closure of tissue cells. Because saliva is a complex liquid with many components, the next step was to identify which component was responsible for wound healing. Using various techniques the researchers split the saliva into its individual components, tested each in their wound model, and finally determined that histatin was responsible.

Dr. Nigel Benjamin, a clinical pharmacologist with St. Bartholomew's Hospital and the London School of Medicine and Dentistry, has done separate research that has shown that when human saliva comes in contact with skin, *nitrite*-a natural component of saliva-breaks down into *nitric oxide,* a chemical compound that is effective in protecting cuts and scratches from unwanted bacteria.

Other research has shown that in addition to *nitric oxide,* human saliva contains other natural antibacterial agents-namely, *lactoferrin* and *lacto-peroxidase,* as well as an analgesic, *opiorphin*.

A word of warning though:
Human saliva contains a wide variety of bacteria that are usually harmless in the mouth but can cause significant infection if introduced deep within an open wound.
If you have a trauma, the best use of your mouth would be to speak, as you ask for medical aid. Obviously the spittle mudpack that Jesus made for the eyes was not applied to an open wound.

The Greek philosopher Plato in his book 'The Republic' wrote an allegory about a group of people who had lived

chained in a cave all of their lives, facing a blank wall. The people watch shadows projected on the wall by things passing in front of a fire behind them, and begin to imagine what these shadows are all about.

According to Plato, the shadows are as close as the prisoners get to seeing reality. He then explains how the philosopher is like a prisoner who is freed from the cave and comes to understand that the shadows on the wall are not reality at all but only shadows.

In the Bible story, the man said that he saw walking trees, suggesting at first reading that the miracle did not work properly. The blind man's sight was improved, but not perfect: Mark 8:25, "After that he put his hands again upon his eyes, and made him look up: and he was restored, and saw every man clearly".

We need to be careful that we don't jump to the conclusion that Jesus was obliged to put his hands on the person a second time (this time no with no saliva) because a botched miracle needed to be fixed.

Why does Jesus have to use spittle once and touching twice? Can't Jesus get it right the first time? Indeed, why does Jesus ask the man "Do you see anything" - as if the outcome were in question? Isn't Jesus the power of the universe?

Now before you burn this book, I respectfully ask that you consider (and acknowledge) two basic facts and two basic assumptions.

The two basic facts are that Jesus did not botch the miracle, and this miracle was as much for the blind man as it was for the audience made up of his friends and also for you and me reading about it today.

The two basic assumptions are that Jesus has the power to speak sight to this blind man, and that God works through the mind to heal.

In the beginning, it was the faith of others who brought the blind man to Jesus. When Jesus applied the Jewish traditional remedies, touch and saliva, His purpose was to help instil faith in the blind man. When

the blind man first saw imperfectly, he was strengthened in his faith that Jesus could do something for him. The spit, touch and the two-stage miracle had nothing to do with Jesus, and everything to do with the blind man's faith.

I have had ocular implant and other surgery on both my eyes and on each occasion I was given a pair of dark glasses to wear until my eyes became accustomed to light again.

Like a good physician, Jesus knew that to immediately expose blind eyes to blinding light would be unbearable and so I suggest that this was a second reason that he released this man's blindness in stages.

What lessons do we find in this for us and for faith healing? Firstly, that when it seems that God has not perfectly solved our problems, perhaps it is to cultivate our faith.

And secondly, traditional healing techniques can create a faith partnership with God to heal our bodies.

Is Faith Healing Possible Today?

Can our minds heal our bodies when we believe in Jesus? Or, do we also need Jesus to be here in person?

"But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal. For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; To another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit; To another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues" (1 Corinthians 12:7-10).

To whatever degree God has created

our minds to heal our bodies, we are taught that the power of God (in the form of the Holy Spirit) is still present to perform healing. We do not need to doubt that.

James Smith wrote, "The mistletoe was called by the Druids "the all-heal," because wonderful cures were supposed to be wrought by it. The Gospel is not only [the] "all-heal" from Heaven, but also the heal all. It heals all who believe, as well as perfectly heals those who do not believe".

God has created our bodies to heal themselves. God has given wisdom and guidance to physicians and researchers to develop and dispense medical aid.

God has created our mind to work in partnership with His power to heal through faith. Have we neglected such a great authority against illness and disease?

Appendix 1

Seven critiques for modern so-called "faith healing"

1. Selective healings - in which the applicants are screened before they are allow ed into the service

2. Chicanery - simple trickery on the part of the faith healers

3. Undocumented, doubtful or demonstrably false claims

4. Spontaneous remission of the disease - due to natural processes and not the power of the faith healer

5. Remission due to medical or surgical intervention

6. Miracles by Satan - Revelation 16:14*

7. Healing which comes as a result of faith in God and not in the faith healer. (And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up) James 5:15

(Give God the credit... Psalm 115:1 says, "Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto thy name give glory, for thy mercy, and for thy truth's sake.")

* Revelation 16:14, "For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty."

Appendix 2

A prayer

Gracious Lord, we ask for a measure of faith to truly believe that You can heal us if You so choose.

Just as we trust that You can do this, we also trust Your judgement in choosing only to give us what is for our best good.

We ask for the healing of our bodies and our minds, the healing of our attitudes and our pride and the healing of our unbelief, freely expecting that you can answer but leaving the outcome to be within the wonderful constraints of Your Will.

And so we ask Your blessing in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, Amen.

This page intentionally blank